

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

We claim:

Claim 1 (original): A process for preparing meta- or para-xylylenediamine, comprising the steps of ammoxidizing meta- or para-xylene to iso- or terephthalonitrile, by contacting the vaporous product of the ammoxidation stage directly with a liquid organic solvent (quench), and hydrogenating the phthalonitrile in the resulting quench solution or suspension, wherein the organic solvent is N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone (NMP).

Claim 2 (canceled):

Claim 3 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~either of claims 1 and 2~~, wherein, before the hydrogenation of the phthalonitrile, water and any products having a boiling point lower than phthalonitrile (low boilers) are partly or fully removed by distillation from the resulting quench solution or suspension.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein, before the hydrogenation of the phthalonitrile, there is no removal of products having a boiling point higher than phthalonitrile (high boilers) from the resulting quench solution or suspension.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein the ammoxidation is carried out at temperatures of from 300 to 500°C over a catalyst comprising V, Sb and/or Cr, as an unsupported catalyst or on an inert support.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein the temperature of the quench effluent in the quench with NMP is from 40 to 180°C.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein the hydrogenation is carried out in the presence of ammonia.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein the hydrogenation is carried out at temperatures of from 40 to 150°C over a catalyst comprising Ni, Co and/or Fe, as an unsupported catalyst or on an inert support.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein, after the hydrogenation, the xylylenediamine is purified by distilling off NMP, any ammonia, and also any relatively low-boiling by-products, via the top and distillatively removing relatively high-boiling impurities via the bottom.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein, after the hydrogenation, the NMP, any ammonia, and also any relatively low-boiling by-products, are distilled off via the top and, afterwards, any relatively high-boiling impurities are removed from the xylylenediamine by distillation via the bottom.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The process according to claim 9 ~~either of the two preceding claims~~, wherein the xylylenediamine, after the distillation, is extracted for further purification with an organic solvent.

Claim 12 (currently amended): The process according to claim 11 ~~the preceding claim~~, wherein cyclohexane or methylcyclohexane are used for the extraction.

Claim 13 (new): The process according to claim 3, wherein, before the hydrogenation of the phthalonitrile, there is no removal of products having a boiling point higher than phthalonitrile (high boilers) from the resulting quench solution or suspension.

Claim 14 (new): The process according to claim 3, wherein the ammoxidation is carried out at temperatures of from 300 to 500°C over a catalyst comprising V, Sb and/or Cr, as an unsupported catalyst or on an inert support.

Claim 15 (new): The process according to claim 4, , wherein the ammoxidation is carried out at temperatures of from 300 to 500°C over a catalyst comprising V, Sb and/or Cr, as an unsupported catalyst or on an inert support.

Claim 16 (new): The process according to claim 3, wherein the temperature of the quench effluent in the quench with NMP is from 40 to 180°C.

Claim 17 (new): The process according to claim 4, wherein the temperature of the quench effluent in the quench with NMP is from 40 to 180°C.

Claim 18 (new): The process according to claim 5, wherein the temperature of the quench effluent in the quench with NMP is from 40 to 180°C.

Claim 19 (new): The process according to claim 3, wherein the hydrogenation is carried out in the presence of ammonia.

Claim 20 (new): The process according to claim 3, wherein the hydrogenation is carried out in the presence of ammonia.